



PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING MINUTES

March 5, 2012

Full Members Present:

Scott Wolf, Vice Chair, Acting Chair
David Banash
Leslie Burg
Candace Havens, Director, ex officio

Setti D. Warren
Mayor

Candace Havens
Director
Planning & Development
Ex-Officio Member

Anne Marie Belrose
Community Development
Manager

Members

Joyce Moss, Chair
Scott Wolf, Vice Chair
David Banash, Treasurer
Leslie Burg, CPC Liaison
Tabetha McCartney
Doug Sweet
Eunice Kim, Alternate

Staff Present:

Anne Marie Belrose, Community Development Manager
Trisha Guditz, Housing Program Manager
Rieko Hayashi, Housing Planner
Lowell Haynes, Community Development Planner
Robert Muollo, Jr., Housing Planner
Alice Walkup, Community Development Senior Planner
Lauren Williams, Community Development Planner

Guests Present:

Sarah Arces
Rob Caruso, Co-chair, Commission on Disability
Joan Kunitz, Human Service Advisory Committee
Michael Lepie
Bart Lloyd, Chair, Newton Housing Partnership
Josephine McNeil
Sheila Mondschein, Chair, Newton Fair Housing Committee

Presentation Materials:

FY13 Annual Action Plan Presentation

Packet Materials:

February 6, 2012 Draft Meeting Minutes
FY13 Draft Annual Action Plan
Staff Memo regarding Commission on Disability request to re-program funds
Staff Memo regarding Newton Corner Advisory Committee request to re-program funds

S. Wolf, Vice Chair, acting as Chair for the evening, called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. He introduced the Board members, and a quorum was established.

1. Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes of the February 5, 2012 meeting. D. Banash complimented the minutes and moved for approval, L. Burg seconded and they were approved unanimously.

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2. Update: Zoning and Planning Working Sessions

S. Wolf introduced the next topic. D. Banash provided some information on the four Working Sessions held by the Zoning and Planning Committee regarding the Riverside rezoning. L. Burg then asked if the report was on the meeting or on the arrangements between the Planning Board and the Committee. S. Wolf said that there would be an update on the arrangements, and it was decided that the update would be delayed until J. Moss arrived, or would be provided at the next meeting.

3. Update: Community Development Week Activities

A. Walkup provided a brief update on Community Development Week, which will be taking place April 9-14, 2012. She said that the emphasis this year would be on the economic development that CDBG and HOME funds provide, which support jobs in the private and nonprofit sectors, as well as child care scholarships, which facilitate full employment by recipients. She also described an effort to highlight the work of well-known local and national organizations that receive CDBG funding, such as the Boys and Girls Club.

4. Public Hearing Item and Action Item: Presentation of the FY13 Annual Action Plan for the City of Newton CDBG Program and the WestMetro HOME Consortium HOME Program.

S. Wolf read the agenda item and A. Belrose began the presentation by thanking the staff for their work on the FY13 Annual Action Plan. She explained that the Plan is the implementation plan for the FY11-15 Consolidated Plan and described the funding amounts anticipated for each program, with:

- \$1,686,582 for the CDBG Program
- \$1,229,906 for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program
- \$175,586 for the Emergency Solutions Grant Program, which will be the subject of the April Board meeting

She also described the reduction in funding this year, with a 16.58% cut in CDBG funds and 39.75% in HOME funds, with several factors contributing to the reduction, including general program cuts at the national level, the use of American Community Survey data to determine the allocation, and negative publicity at the national level for the HOME program. Showing the annual allocation since FY1980, she described how the allocation has declined over time, dropping approximately 30% in the past two years. She then laid out the anticipated apportionment of the CDBG allocation, with the following breakdown:

- 59% Affordable housing activities
- 20% Administration
- 15% Public services
- 5% Target neighborhood improvements
- 1% Economic development
- 0% Architectural access (using re-programmed FY11 Administrative funds to fund the FY13 projects, and is the subject of a Substantial Amendment later in the meeting)

Housing and Community Development staff then presented the priority projects for the program areas which they manage.

For Architectural Access, A. Walkup, Community Development Planner, explained the two areas of focus for the FY13 projects: curb cut improvements citywide (\$55,900) and an accessible pathway at Newton Centre Playground (\$40,000). \$8,000 is being held for access projects that are to be determined.

T. Guditz, Housing Program Manager, then introduced the Housing Development and Rehabilitation section of the presentation, and described the funding anticipated:

- \$660,279 – Housing Rehabilitation
- \$0 – Housing Rehab Revolving Loan Fund (no funds from the entitlement, but an anticipated \$119,500 in program income)
- \$121,899 – Affordable Housing Development pool
- \$7,170 – CHDO Operating Expenses at 5%; CAN-DO is Newton's Only Certified CHDO

She then identified the Housing Development priorities:

1. Reduce financial and institutional barriers to increasing the availability of affordable housing by increasing funding; expediting the local funding review and approval process; and providing more case management and financial education for tenants
 - Working to develop a Municipal Housing Trust

R. Muollo, Housing Planner, introduced Housing Partnership Chair, Bart Lloyd and Newton Fair Housing Committee Chair, Sheila Mondshein. He then identified the next priority:

2. Provide deeper subsidies to create rental units for low-income households, persons with special needs, and persons with disabilities
 - Myrtle Village that provides accessible and visitable units, to low-income households
3. Institutionalizing principles and practices of fair housing
 - Variety of activities to address fair housing, including public education and training, a Fair Housing Initiative Program grant application, a HOME Consortium Language Assistance Plan and Analysis of Impediments, among others

R. Hayashi, Housing Planner, oversees the Housing Rehabilitation and First-time Homebuyer Program. She discussed two projects, the rehabilitation of a Barry Price Center group home to improve accessibility, and the rehabilitation of a homeowner unit, with both exterior and interior replacements and improvements.

T. Guditz described the WestMetro HOME Consortium membership, of which Newton is the lead municipality. She described the administrative burden versus the small amount of money received for some municipalities within the Consortium. R. Muollo showed a graph illustrating the allocations to each municipality and the allocations to the Consortium since 1992, which showed the significant reduction in funding this year. T. Guditz described a housing development project taking place in Watertown and R. Muollo described one in Framingham.

T. Guditz described changes for the HOME Program in FY13, captured in a new proposed rule, including reducing the amount of time for fund repayment, a mandatory conversion to rental units if homeownership units are unfilled for six months, and other new requirements. R.

Muollo explained new HUD guidance regarding resale/recapture, and the FY13 Annual Action Plan may need to be updated as a result.

L. Haynes introduced Joan Kunitz, a member of the Human Service Advisory Committee, and then described the five-year grant approach to Human Service funding, of which the amount has diminished over time. He described how Human Service funding addresses needs of children, youth, adults and families, older adults, and people with disabilities. He also described asking if any recipients would give up the funding, because it has been reduced so much, and those who responded said they would like to remain recipients.

L. Williams addressed Economic Development, through the Microenterprise Loan program, which has been undersubscribed, but recently received two inquiries, and the Family Day Care Program, which has similarly been underutilized. She then spoke about Neighborhood Improvements, with Newton Corner the FY13 target neighborhood, and described that the full FY13 allocation, \$100,000, will go towards removing a tree stump and replacing a wall at Charlesbank Park. She also mentioned that Newton Corner unexpended funds will be under consideration later tonight through a Substantial Amendment.

D. Banash asked if the Human Service Advisory Committee met to make the recommendations and J. Kunitz said that they did meet and discussed in detail how best to address the cuts. D. Banash asked if the amount would ever be so small that some recipient organizations might drop out. L. Haynes said that he did not receive many responses, but that those who did, did say that they would remain recipients. He commended the recipients for stretching the funds they receive, through administrative efficiencies, but did note that some agencies have had to let go of staff. J. Kunitz said that in the case of child care, the scholarship amount may be reduced to each recipient, so that the same number of children are still served, but the burden is greater on the parents.

D. Banash asked R. Hayashi about whether the projects shown were the only rehabilitation projects, and she said that they represent a sample, and are two which are expected to carry into FY13. She also addressed his question about prioritization, saying that emergencies are addressed quickly, but that there is also a waiting list of applicants, and these two sample projects were on the list for two years.

L. Burg asked about the Microenterprise Loan Program, and L. Williams said that inquiries had been fielded, and applications provided. L. Burg said that the funding may be better utilized in another program. A. Belrose concurred that the program has been undersubscribed, and staff may bring a proposal to reallocate funds in the future.

D. Banash asked about how the cuts impact staff, and C. Havens described that the City has been able to accommodate cuts, but the projects require the same level of staffing for implementation, so that presents a challenge with the reduction in allocation. A. Belrose mentioned that HUD caps the administration of the program at 20%, but that time spent on

specific projects can be charged to those projects, which the City will be doing this year to close the budget gap.

S. Wolf then opened the floor for public comment and recognized J. McNeil, who provided a letter to the Board regarding several items within the FY13 Annual Action Plan. She noted the \$10,500 in anticipated Program Income from the Microenterprise Loan Pool, and said that during her time on the Economic Development Advisory Committee, the funding has not been used frequently for its two purposes of either helping low-income persons start a business, or helping a small business owner hire an additional staff member. She also said that the Family Day Care Grant program has also been underutilized. She would like these funds to address family homelessness, and she suggested that HOME funds also go to a rental subsidy program, rather than housing development. She mentioned the model of the HomeBase Program, which was rapidly oversubscribed and had low rent levels, which limited the neighborhoods in which people could live, frequently in places with inadequate schools and other amenities. She suggests that 30 families could benefit with the funds being used for rental subsidy.

S. Wolf asked if the FY13 Annual Action Plan is approved as it is, could it be changed at a later date and A. Belrose said yes, that could be done through the Substantial Amendment process. L. Burg asked whether staff has had an opportunity to review the proposal, and A. Belrose indicated that it had just been received tonight.

B. Lloyd, Chair of the Newton Housing Partnership, addressed the housing priorities by describing that the Trust can help with providing funding more rapidly, and that deeper subsidies for developers would help provide more housing, more quickly. S. Mondschein, Chair of the Fair Housing Committee, said that R. Muollo did a good job of laying out the Fair Housing priorities, and did not want to provide additional comments.

L. Burg moved, C. Havens seconded, and the vote was unanimous in favor of approval of the Plan as presented. L. Burg thanked those who attended and presented the Plan.

5. Public Hearing Item and Action Item: Recommendation from the Commission on Disability for a Substantial Amendment to the FY11 Annual Action Plan, of the FY11-15 Consolidated Plan, to transfer \$104,000 from FY11 Administration Funds to the planned FY13 Architectural Access projects, as described in the FY13 Annual Action Plan.

S. Wolf read the item, and A. Walkup reiterated, as mentioned earlier, the item is a recommendation from the Commission on Disability to re-program administrative funds to support the FY13 architectural access projects, as identified in the FY11-15 Consolidated Plan, with the exception of the Bibbo Center, a property which is in the process of being sold. S. Wolf asked how the re-programming FY11 administrative funds would impact FY13 administrative costs, and A. Belrose explained that it would have no impact on administrative funds, because they are capped at 20% each year, and when unexpended, must be spent on projects in future years, rather than on administration.

D. Banash moved to approve, L. Burg seconded, and the item was approved unanimously.

6. Public Hearing Item and Action Item: Recommendation from the Newton Corner Advisory Committee for a Substantial Amendment to the FY07 and FY10 Annual Action Plans, of the FY06-FY10 Consolidated Plan, to reallocate \$121,696.25 in unexpended funds among a variety of projects.

S. Wolf read the item, and L. Williams described the item under consideration as a re-programming of unexpended funds for Newton Corner, with six projects requiring a substantial amendment (a project budget change of 25% or greater). The following table indicates the changes proposed:

REALLOCATION OF FUNDS: SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT REQUIRED

<u>Project</u>	<u>Current Budget</u>	<u>New Budget</u>
Church Street Traffic Calming	\$ 19,319.90	\$ 0.00
Newton Corner Tree Plantings	\$ 1,657.82	\$ 0.00
Charlesbank Park Improvements Phase 2	\$ 0.00	\$120,000.00
Centre & Richardson Traffic Calming	\$ 26,628.00	\$ 10,500.00
Carleton Park Improvements Phase 2	\$ 4,674.91	\$ 8,750.00
Farlow & Chaffin Park Improvements	\$ 25,947.62	\$ 38,447.00

REALLOCATION OF FUNDS: SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT NOT REQUIRED

The following are projects that have had unexpended funds reallocated, but do not require a substantial amendment.

<u>Project</u>	<u>Old Budget</u>	<u>New Budget</u>
Park & Vernon Traffic Calming	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,750.00
NC Pedestrian Improvements	\$ 33,468.00	\$ 26,932.00

L. Williams discussed the input from the City's Engineering staff regarding the Church Street Traffic Calming project, which would require a great deal more funds than currently allocated, and raised concerns about pedestrian safety. Thus, the Newton Corner Advisory Committee voted to de-fund the project. The Newton Corner Tree Plantings project came in under budget, and the excess funds will be re-allocated. The Charlesbank Park funds, with \$100,000 from the FY13 allocation, will be combined with \$20,000 in reallocated funds to complete Phase 2 work. The Centre & Richardson Traffic Calming project has more money than needed, and that excess will be reallocated. The amount budgeted for Carleton Park Phase 2 will help complete that project. The Farlow & Chaffin Park Improvements project includes repair to an historic wall and several improvements within the park.

L. Burg felt that the wall at Farlow & Chaffin does need repair, but questioned if such an amount was needed for it. Discussion ensued about whether the former home, now housing the Parks and Recreation Department, is only covered as historic, or if the designation extends to the full park and the wall in question. S. Wolf believed that the grounds were donated to the park, and that the wall repair was the subject of a discussion by the Board in the previous year

regarding representation of the north and south parts of the Newton Corner neighborhood. C. Havens said that preserving what the City can is important and L. Burg again noted the high cost of the repair.

D. Banash described what he has found to be a difficult intersection, when traveling east to west on Tremont St. to Church St. next to Farlow Park into Newton, with a dangerous left turn. He asked if the Church Street Traffic Calming Project is addressing that. L. Williams said that the intersection is by the YMCA and Firehouse. D. Banash would like the location he mentioned to be addressed.

S. Wolf for asked for public comment, and with none, D. Banash moved to approve item 6, S. Wolf seconded, and it was unanimously approved.

He then said that the Zoning and Planning Committee item should be put on the next month's agenda. A. Walkup said that joint public hearing with the Zoning and Planning Committee on the Riverside rezoning is set for March 22nd. L. Burg said that it would have been good to discuss among the membership before the hearing, but she thought such a discussion would have to take place after it. C. Havens suggested such a discussion could lead to an organized response from the Board. A. Walkup proposed setting an interim meeting, with the proper public notice, for such a discussion. D. Banash suggested meeting before the public hearing, that same night, and A. Walkup will look into such a meeting. C. Havens said that the start time for the March 22nd hearing may be earlier, at 7:15 pm.

A. Walkup said that public comments can be made to her regarding the FY13 Annual Action Plan for fifteen days (due March 19) and regarding the two substantial amendments re-programming items (agenda items 5 and 6) for thirty days (due April 3).

S. Arces asked about West Newton, and whether the fact that it is not receiving funding this year was anticipated. A. Walkup said that it was planned to happen that way, and that the four target neighborhoods rotate years of receiving funds. C. Havens said that the City received the MIT project report regarding West Newton, which will be posted online, and City staff will work the Advisory Group.

S. Wolf moved to adjourn, L. Burg seconded, and there was a unanimous vote to adjourn at 9:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne Marie Belrose
Community Development Manager